

California Department of Veterans Affairs



NEWS RELEASE

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STATE MOVES FORWARD TO BUILD VETERANS CEMETERY

SACRAMENTO – March 15, 2004 – In recognition of the Governor’s ongoing commitment to California Veterans, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Thomas Johnson announced today that significant progress has been made towards beginning construction of the Northern California State Veterans Cemetery (NCSVC) in Shasta County. State Veterans Affairs will move forward to accept a construction grant from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs State Cemetery Grant Program, subject to finalization of the arrangements with Shasta County relative to the on-going maintenance of the cemetery.

The proposed cemetery, to be located on land donated to the state near the community of Igo, in Shasta County, is a shared project between the state and the federal government. The federal government provides a grant for the construction and the state owns and operates the cemetery. The Northern California State Veterans Cemetery will be the first such cemetery in California.

Construction on the NCSVC should begin later this year and, once commenced, it should take slightly more than a year to complete. Final plans, including the required environmental reports, have been approved by the state and the state has received confirmation from the USDVA that they will complete their final review in anticipation of awarding a grant to fund the project this year.

“It has been a challenge for the past few months to find the money for the cost of operating the cemetery,” said Johnson, “but we are very pleased that the County of Shasta and the state have been able to work together to make real progress. As you know, the state is experiencing a budget crisis and our major concern has been how to provide for the ongoing costs. We are now working on agreements between the state and the county, and although the final determination for the sources of operating costs is yet to be decided, there has been excellent cooperation between all of the parties.”

“Northern California veterans and Shasta County leaders have done a wonderful job of finding the site and galvanizing not only north state veterans but veterans from around California towards the Redding Cemetery project,” Johnson added. “The project will be a culmination of a lot of people’s efforts, over many years, benefiting Northern California Veterans and their loved ones as well as the Redding economy as a whole.”

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State Moves Forward To Build Veterans Cemetery cont.
Page 2

The USDVA may provide up to 100 percent of the development cost for an approved project, including operating equipment. The USDVA does not provide for acquisition of land. The construction of the NCSVC will be provided by a federal grant in the amount of \$7 million, which will also cover the costs of design, development and equipment.

The State Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement the National Cemetery Administration. The program assists states in providing gravesites for veterans in those areas where USDVA's national cemeteries cannot fully satisfy their burial needs.

The USDVA's National Cemetery Administration is also in the process of establishing a new federal veterans cemetery near Dixon, California. According to Anthony J. Principi, Secretary for the USDVA, the acquisition of the land for that cemetery is progressing well and construction funding for the first phase of the Dixon cemetery is included in the president's budget for fiscal year 2005.